ENVIRONMENT CANTERBURY

LGOIMA Response – Limited Expenditure Release; Comparative Analysis and Ratepayer Modelling Refused

Request 3512C | Response dated 29 July 2026

1. Purpose of this Note

This note records the formal response of Environment Canterbury (Canterbury Regional Council) to Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 request 3512C concerning expenditure on flood protection, coastal hazard and managed-retreat related consulting, comparative analysis of infrastructure protection versus managed retreat pathways, and modelling of long-term ratepayer and rating-revenue impacts. It is prepared as a public-interest transparency record.

2. Request Summary

After refinement, the request sought:

- Total expenditure by Environment Canterbury on external consultants, advisors, or contractors from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2026 for flood protection and river management schemes, coastal hazard assessment and adaptation planning, and managed retreat / property acquisition / voluntary buyout programmes, broken down by financial year and main project where possible.
- Any reports, briefings, technical assessments, or comparative analysis prepared or commissioned since 1 January 2020 evaluating the costs, benefits, risks, or long-term fiscal implications of major infrastructure protection options versus managed retreat or property acquisition pathways in the Canterbury region.
- Any modelling or advice prepared since 1 January 2020 on the long-term impacts on ratepayers, property values, or council revenue from managed retreat, property acquisition, or large-scale hazard zoning in the Canterbury region.

3. Key Formal Responses

3.1 Expenditure (Question 1)

Environment Canterbury released figures for three named projects (four line items):

- 2019/20 Timaru District Coastal Hazard Assessment: $55,849 + GST (50/50 shared with Timaru District Council; total project $111,698 + GST).
- 2021/22 Kaikōura District Coastal Hazard Assessment: $88,600 + GST.
- 2024/25 Waitarakao project: $82,573 + GST.
- 2024/25 Waitarakao project: $635,582 + GST.

No broader regional totals for flood protection, river management, or managed-retreat consulting expenditure were provided beyond these items.

3.2 Comparative analysis and ratepayer-impact modelling (Questions 2 and 3)

Both parts were refused under section 17(f) of the LGOIMA (substantial collation or research).

The Council stated that responding would require searching across multiple business units and reviewing a potentially significant volume of information to determine whether individual documents fell within scope. Because the request had not been further refined (for example to a specific geographic area or project), these parts were refused.

No comparative analysis of infrastructure protection versus managed retreat pathways, and no modelling of long-term ratepayer, property-value, or rating-revenue impacts, was released.

4. Significance

This response adds a further data point to the national pattern:

- Expenditure transparency was limited to a small number of named coastal-hazard projects.
- Strategic comparative analysis of infrastructure protection versus managed retreat / property acquisition pathways was not released.
- Modelling or advice on long-term ratepayer, property-value, or council-revenue impacts was not released.

The refusal rests on substantial collation rather than an explicit statement that no such analysis exists. The practical outcome is the same: the comparative and fiscal-impact material sought was not provided.

5. Source Document

Environment Canterbury letter, File Number GOVE/INQU/OMBU/3512C, 29 July 2026, from Brett Aldridge, Director Operations.

Public-interest transparency record prepared from primary LGOIMA response material. July 2026.